

THE CASTLE OF BLOIS.—As a postscript to the account of this structure, which appeared in our pages a fortnight ago, we give the following from a foreign correspondent of the *Athenæum*:—"The restoration of the castle at Blois is proceeding rapidly and well. At present, it is confined to the north side of the quadrangle—that built by Francis I. The deplorable fact is, that a considerable piece at the end further from the great entrance is gone—pulled down by Gaston of Orleans, and replaced by a bit in the cold, heavy, tasteless, styleless style of his age, in which the south side is built. It looks as if he actually contemplated destroying the whole magnificent work of Francis. The end pulled down contained part of the rooms of Henry II., adjoining those of Catherine de Medicis. A link in the historic chain of the several scenes of the great tragedy acted in these apartments is thus wanting; viz., the back staircase by which the royal assassin went to the upper room, where he distributed the daggers to his hired accomplices, and awaited the issue of his perfidy. The magnificent staircase is now completely restored; and the salamanders, which Mr. Murray says 'have been all effaced,' again decorate it in profusion, together with the emblems of Claude and various other devices and ciphers of these and the succeeding sovereigns. Beautiful as this staircase is, the less showy one in the right-hand corner on entering the quadrangle is, I think, still more so. This belongs to the east side, built of brick, and said to be of the time of Louis XII. Nothing can be conceived more perfect than the proportions, more graceful than the curve, of this staircase. The roof is like a half unfolded fan; and round the top of the central pillar supporting it winds, or climbs, the sole ornament—a beautiful border, the effect of which is singularly elegant and harmonious. Far less ornate than the staircase of Francis I., this exceeds it in unity, grace, and symmetry. It leads to the *Salle des Etats* (which is still used as the *Salle d'exercice et de gymnastique* for the soldiers), and to other rooms dedicated to barrack uses. The only portion as yet rescued from this desecration is the north side. A vandalism at least equal to that of Gaston of Orleans has been committed in our day. The half of the chapel, a beautiful little building, has been pulled down,—it is difficult to see for what end. The other half serves as a workshop for the men employed on the building. The restored rooms, splendid in colour and gilding, are small and low; like those of almost all residences, even royal ones, of that date. The middle ages, like antiquity, reserved vast proportions for their public buildings; and the taste for gigantic habitations is of recent date. It was carried to its height by Louis XIV., and is very characteristic of that boundless inflation of vanity, pride, and selfishness which no man perhaps ever felt to such a degree, or acted upon with such consistency."

GYMNASIA OF THE GREEKS.—The gymnasia were large buildings encircled by gardens and groves. On entering, the first thing was a large square court, surrounded by porticoes and great halls, in which the philosophers, rhetoricians, and sophists taught their disciples. One side of the quadrangle, however, was occupied by rooms for bathing, and other purposes. To guard against the southern winds driving the winter rains into the court, the portico facing the south was made double. You next entered a square inclosure, in the centre of which were fine plane trees. Cinnamon extended round three sides. Those towards the north were, double, to afford a shelter from the scorching rays of the summer sun. The opposite piazza was called *Neyton*, in the middle of which and through its whole length, they contrived a sort of pathway, about twelve feet wide, and about two deep, where, sheltered from the weather, and separated from the spectators ranged along the sides, the young scholars amused themselves in wrestling. —*J. A. St. John.*

BREACH OF AGREEMENT.—At the Town Hall, Stratford-on-Avon, last week, a man named Thomas Thompson, a labourer, was charged by Mr. Shesby, bricklayer, with neglecting his work, and failing to fulfil his engagement of working till next Michaelmas, at 10s. per week. The defendant had gone to Wolverton, where he obtained more profitable employment. He acknowledged his fault, and was liberated on paying the expenses.

ASSURANCE A DUTY.—It may be felt by many, that, admitting this duty is full, their income is nevertheless insufficient to enable them to spare even the small sum necessary as an annual premium for life assurance. The necessities of the present are in their case so great, that they do not see how they can afford it. We believe there can be no obstacle which is apt to appear more real than this, where an income is at all limited; and yet it is easy to show that no obstacle could be more ideal. It will readily be acknowledged by everybody who has an income at all, that there must be some who have smaller incomes. Say, for instance, that any man has 400l. per annum; he cannot doubt that there are some who have only 350l. Now, if these persons live on 350l., why may not he do so too, sparing the odd 50l. as a deposit for life assurance? In like manner, he who has 2000l. may live as men do who have only 1750l., and devote the remaining 250l. to have a sum assured upon his life. And so on. It may require an effort to accomplish this; but is not the object worthy of an effort? And can any man be held as honest, or any way good, who will not make such an effort, rather than be always liable to the risk of leaving in beggary the beings whom he must cherish on earth, and for whose support he alone is responsible?—*Chambers's Information for the People.*

NEW THEATRE AT CARLSRUHE.—The *Art-Union* says that the necessity caused by the late configuration of the public theatre, of constructing a new one, for which the situation is not yet assigned, produces much discussion as to the style of architecture of a building intended to become a model specimen of art in Germany. "For this reason it ought to be in the German or Gothic style, which expression allows a wide sphere of meaning, when referring to those particular additions or retractions which form a specific difference from the universal Gothic character in all countries where Gothic buildings are to be met with, from the Gothic-German style. The Grand Duke of Baden is desirous to have a variety of competing plans laid before him. He is reported to have specially invited M. Heideloff, of Nuremberg, who has devoted almost his whole life to the Gothic style, to furnish a plan for the above-mentioned edifice, combining all the advantages of a free egress from all the respective localities for the players and audience. If the theatre should be built in the common style—which, though gorgeous, can never be grand—the Munich theatre, as far as the accommodations of access and egress are considered, justly deserves to become the model for buildings of this description."

MANCHESTER.—One of the profoundest writers on social politics of the present age has justly remarked that few of us are aware of the value of Manchester in the present constitution of things; perhaps still fewer amongst us have an adequate conception of the importance, to the future, of those gigantic forces which as yet lie undeveloped in the system of which it is the representative. Manchester is the type of one grand idea—*machinery*—an idea that is new in the world; at least in that large sense in which its vital significance consists. The ancients had no conception of such an idea; and hence, the past can teach us nothing either of warning or of wisdom respecting it. The record of an eternal element of human society, which has begun to influence the affairs of nations, and aspires and promises soon to become the world-ruling power, does not occupy a single page in the history of civilization. It is a new idea—a new power; and thus, even and anon, as the human race advances in intelligence, are new powers evoked by the human intellect that give a fresh impetus to the ever-progressive movement. Thus it has ever been. As men have been educated to receive new truths—moral powers, or new inventions—physical powers, they have been given. —*People's Journal.*

CONTRIVANCE.—In front of the entrance-gate to Bevis Mount, the residence of Mr. W. Betts, there is a spring plate let into the ground, which, on being pressed by the wheel of a carriage, sets the bell of the porter's lodge in motion. The only inconvenience attending it is that a mischievous person by a jerking step can move the plate, and the gate-keeper has been more than once imposed on in that way.

PROJECTED WORKS.—Tenders have been called for by advertisement, for erecting two chapels, and an entrance lodge at Penryn, Cornwall; various works required in the restoration, &c., of St. Mary's church, Scarborough; also for the various works required in the repair of buildings on the estates of the Trinity House, Hull, for six to twelve months; for erecting sick-wards and washhouses, at the Blything Union Workhouse; erecting enclosure wall and iron railings of St. Mary's churchyard, Southampton; erecting and completely finishing the several works of the new battery at Point, Portsmouth; erecting a temporary bridge at St. Olave's, Yarmouth; making certain alterations at the Harthorne Union Workhouse; quarrying and pulling stones, hauling, repelling, &c., and relaying flag-pitching, for three years for the carriage-way of the Bristol Paving Commissioners (separate tenders); also for a supply of 700 tons of Guernsey granite lumps for breaking; and for making two cylindrical sewers, one of 154 yards, the other of 210 yards, at Cambridge.

ORDER IN COUNCIL AS TO ENGINEERS.—By the rules and regulations of the order in council of 27th February last, to which reference was some time since made in *THE BUILDER*, engineers in her Majesty's naval service are to be classed as either inspectors of machinery afloat, chief engineers, or assistant engineers; the two first to be appointed by commission, and rank with, but after, masters of the fleet; and the last to be appointed by order, and rank with, but after, second masters. The two last are to be subdivided, each into three classes. Inspectors must be "men of experience and acknowledged ability, in whose judgment, integrity, and talent, implicit reliance can be placed." Chief engineers, besides a practical knowledge of every particular of the construction and working of marine engines and boilers, the principles of expansion and its gearings, &c., must "be able and willing to exert himself practically as a workman when occasion requires," to keep accounts, make notes in the log, and sketches of machinery, &c. The assistant engineer must produce certificates of servitude in a factory, or other proof of his acquaintance with engine-work, &c. Inspectors are to have 25l. per month of sea pay, or 13l. 5s. for harbour service; chief engineers, 12l. to 20l. per month of sea pay, or 6l. 12s. to 11l. for harbour service; and assistants, 8l. to 12l. of sea pay, or 4l. 4s. to 6l. 12s. for harbour service.

GUIDE FOR SCREW-CUTTING, invented by Mr. J. Bolton of 22, Ivy-lane, Newgate-street. In order to apply this screw-cutting instrument to the lathe it is necessary to have a brass chuck screwed on to the mandril, and which must have a screw cut on it similar to the nose of the mandril to receive the wood chucks in which the work is to be turned. In the centre of the brass chuck a square hole is to be made, which will receive the square end of the steel screw of the instrument. The wood chucks must be pierced through to admit freely the plain part of the steel screw, so as to reach the square hole of the brass chuck. The work having been turned to receive the screw, the steel screw is passed into the square hole of the brass chuck, and the front centre of the lathe is then placed in the centre of the steel screw of the instrument, when it is ready for work. The screw tool is set parallel with the work to be cut, by means of a plate and screw, the latter passing through an oblong slot and sighting on either edge. The screw-cutting tool, and the screw-cutting instrument, must be of the same rake. For ordinary purposes, six steel screws of different rakes will answer. The instrument will cut on large or small diameter screws, with 2, 3, 4, 5, or more threads, by regulating the cutting tool.

IRON.—English bar-iron has been in little demand during the month, and prices have fallen 2s. per ton. Within the last few days a better demand has taken place, and makers now refuse to sell under 82. 10s. at the works in Wales. The rail market has been exceedingly dull, principally owing to the difficulty the various companies experience in getting to their calls. Nail rods, hoops, and sheets are from 5s. to 7s. 6d. per ton less in Liverpool. Scotch pig-iron declined to 65s. 6d., mixed numbers, and 64s. to 65s. No. 1; but within the last few days rather higher prices have been asked. Swedish iron and steel are dull of sale. —*Birmingham Journal.*